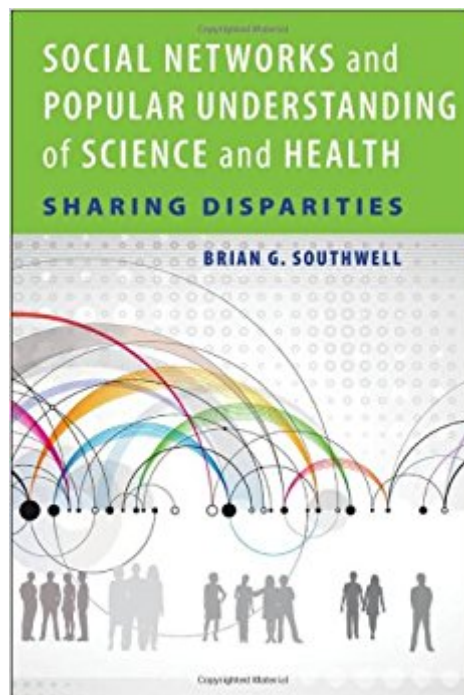




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Social Networks And Popular Understanding Of Science And Health: Sharing Disparities



Synopsis

Using social media and peer-to-peer networks to teach people about science and health may seem like an obvious strategy. Yet recent research suggests that systematic reliance on social networks may be a recipe for inequity. People are not consistently inclined to share information with others around them, and many people are constrained by factors outside of their immediate control. Ironically, the highly social nature of humankind complicates the extent to which we can live in a society united solely by electronic media. Stretching well beyond social media, this book documents disparate tendencies in the ways people learn and share information about health and science. By reviewing a wide array of existing research—ranging from a survey of New Orleans residents in the weeks after Hurricane Katrina to analysis of Twitter posts related to H1N1 to a physician-led communication campaign explaining the benefits of vaginal birth—Brian G. Southwell explains why some types of information are more likely to be shared than others and how some people never get exposed to seemingly widely available information. This book will appeal to social science students and citizens interested in the role of social networks in information diffusion and yet it also serves as a cautionary tale for communication practitioners and policymakers interested in leveraging social ties as an inexpensive method to spread information.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book reviews the basic knowledge in social network and uses health and epidemiology as example. People in public relation or marketing can also learn from the examples and using

epidemiology as a metaphor to PR crisis situation.

I've been in the healthcare marketing industry for over 10 years. This is a real look at the digital health and wellness marketing landscape. I would even call it a clinical view of what is going on and how sociology impacts social media among groups, in relation to health news exchange, (i.e., is it effective, why? why no?). Overall, an excellent book to have as a reference. Southwell's academic writing style was a pleasure to read and honestly exactly what this category needed.

Social Networks and Popular Understanding of Science and Health is a rare book in that it is both interesting and useful. Southwell argues against prevailing assumptions concerning health information and new media, demonstrating through careful case studies that disparities in knowledge and information sharing are conditioned by multiple social and psychological variables. Such contexts are too often ignored, with deleterious consequences for both the theory and practice of science and health communication. Despite being an outsider to the field, I found the book to be an excellent and enlightening read, advancing and nuancing my understanding of both health communication and new/networked media. Clearly written, it would be useful for adoption in undergraduate or graduate courses, and is one of those rare academic texts that will be directly useful for health communication practitioners as well.

This book is a great read and covers much of the major research in social networks. It is analytical and engagingly written. I would recommend it to anyone interested in the social context of health and science communication.

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